



Workforce Board

The Workforce Board is a state agency committed to the development of a highly skilled workforce that will sustain Washington's economic vitality. We accomplish this through research, partnership building, and policies designed to serve a diverse population.

Assessing the Need for Postsecondary Education

***Question:** What does the economy need?

***Answer:** More people with postsecondary training, at all levels, particularly mid-level. The state is under supplying the number of workers needed to fill job openings that require more than one but less than four years of postsecondary training.

- When comparing the number of newly prepared workers coming out of state training programs (community and technical colleges, proprietary schools, and apprenticeship programs) with the number of net job openings at that educational level, we are currently supplying only 90 percent of the number needed.
- More employers have difficulty finding job applicants with a postsecondary vocational credential than have difficulty at the baccalaureate level.

MYTH

Myth: "WA should aim to be number one among states in baccalaureate attainment."

Fact: WA ranks in the middle among all states for BA attainment. This means WA is producing about the right number of BAs – not more than needed, not less than needed.

We Need More Baccalaureates...but only in Certain Fields

- **A Joint Assessment by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Workforce Board, shows that in aggregate, the state is supplying the number of new baccalaureate completers that are required to fill job openings in the state at that educational level.**
- **The problem: There is a mismatch between the baccalaureate fields of study and the occupations that are in demand. There is substantial under-supply of baccalaureates in health, engineering, computer science and certain fields of education.**
- **WA's importation of baccalaureate degree holders has been disproportionately in the fields of health, engineering, computer science and certain fields of education.**

The truth about interstate rankings on BA attainment

- When accounting for the 40 percent of BA graduates that begin at community colleges, and out of state students, WA ranks about 28 among states in BA attainment (about in the middle).
- A middle ranking is the ideal ranking for BA attainment because some states produce more than they need and some produce less than they need.
- If WA aims for "Number 1" in BA attainment then it would be supplying the rest of the country with people who have BAs.

The Workforce Board advocates for the training of individuals to fill the over 75 percent of jobs not requiring a four-year degree.

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